

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 19, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. FUNDING UPDATE

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA):

WMATA staff advanced four proposals to increase the amount of time available for maintenance of the Metrorail system. The WMATA Board authorized staff to hold a public hearing about the proposed options for new Metrorail service hours and will receive public comment in October. Depending upon how much bus service will be provided at these times, there may be a cost impact in the FY 2018 budget.

WMATA indicated that they have been using a larger percentage of capital funds than in previous years since the 7000 series rail cars are being delivered at an accelerated pace.

The WMATA Board will receive the draft FY 2018 Operating Budget in November and the Draft FY2018 Capital Budget in December.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa):

The City is assembling the materials needed for an application of FY 2023 CMAQ and RSTP funds. These materials will be brought before the Transportation Commission in November, 2016.

Smart Scale (Previously referred as HB2):

After receiving comments and feedback from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the City's Smart Scale applications were successfully submitted by September 30, 2016. Next steps include: review, screening, and scoring of applications through December 2016; submission of projects and scores to Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in January 2017, and; funding decisions by CTB to support the development of the draft Six-Year Improvement Plan in April 2017.

Background: The City's transportation program has many sources of funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources. City staff coordinates regularly with representatives from each agency listed above to discuss funding opportunities from state and regional sources and the City's funding obligations for WMATA.

B. KING STREET METRORAIL STATION

The City is in the process of finalizing all comments on the final set of plans and taking steps to get all financing in place for the project's implementation. This project is scheduled to go out for bid this winter (2016-2017) with construction to begin in the summer of 2017.

Background: The King Street Metrorail Station is Alexandria's largest transit facility and requires significant updates, expansions, and safety improvements. The City began addressing these needs by requesting that WMATA conduct a feasibility study for rebuilding the access facilities at the lot in 2006. The result of this study was released in March 2008. Through an extensive vetting process with the general public and stakeholders, the City developed a design for the station that improves non-motorized access, bus access, shuttle and taxi access, short-term rental car access, and aesthetics. In 2012, the design was endorsed by the Transportation Commission, the City Council, and the Planning Commission. After approval, the design was refined, and the City determined that some of the features of the facility needed to meet City standards rather than WMATA standards. A long discussion between WMATA and the City resulted in a decision that allowed the facility to be designed using City standards. WMATA gave the City a permanent easement to construct a transit facility, and the City agreed to maintain the facility in perpetuity. After this agreement, a more detailed design was produced for the facility and the cost was higher than budgeted. The improvement was placed in the FY 2016 CIP budget process and eventually acquired sufficient funding to be constructed.

C. EISENHOWER AVENUE METRORAIL STATION

The final design plans for the Eisenhower Metrorail Station were submitted to WMATA this fall and comments were received from WMATA on the final plans. The City is currently revising the plans based on WMATA's comments. Implementation of the Eisenhower Avenue Metro improvements is contingent on redevelopment of adjacent parcels.

Background: In the spring of 2003, the City of Alexandria approved a small area plan that guides development in the area known as East Eisenhower. The plan calls for significant amounts of high density development within a short distance of the Eisenhower Metrorail Station. To permit large mixed-use development in this area, new streets must be built and utilities must be relocated. The existing Eisenhower Metrorail Station entrance is approved to be modified to accommodate the development. The City of Alexandria has an agreement with adjacent developers and WMATA that addresses improvements at the Eisenhower Metrorail Station and the release of land for development. The City has committed to making several improvements including renovation of the bus loop, relocation of transit services, design and construction of an attractive pedestrian plaza in front of the station, bus shelters for rider comfort, and real-time bus information displays. This project has been through an extensive planning process, which examined several alternatives to various aspects of the project. The design of the pedestrian plaza is now complete. The City, WMATA, and the developers

finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in late 2015 that will permit the project to move to the construction phase.

D. OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN

The parking study for Old Town North has been completed. The study evaluated on-street parking conditions for the entire planning area and off-street parking conditions at eight parking garages. The study also included recommendations for parking management for consideration in the overall update to the master plan.

Overall there is sufficient on-street parking in the planning area, although there were several blocks that were observed as full, mainly near the retail areas. Many of these blocks were unrestricted or had restrictions that ended at 5:00 PM. A turnover analysis of the retail blocks noted that many vehicles parked for over two hours and a number of blocks had vehicles parked for the entire day. The off-street parking garages that were surveyed were found to have very low occupancies. The peak parking of 47% occurred during the morning weekday survey. The remaining surveys in the evening and on Saturday showed all eight of the garages were very underutilized with most garages well below 50% occupancy.

The transportation study is currently underway, which will include an analysis of existing and future traffic conditions in the planning area, taking potential development into consideration. The study will also analyze the impact of converting the two one way streets (Madison and Montgomery Streets) into two-way traffic. The consultant is currently working on the existing conditions traffic model using existing traffic counts that were collected by the City or specific developments in the planning area. This fall they will prepare the future traffic models, which will be used to inform some of the transportation and land use related recommendations in the final update to the master plan.

Background: The current Old Town North Small Area Plan was adopted in 1992. The planning effort to update this small area plan began in September 2015 with the appointment of an Advisory Group and is anticipated to conclude in January 2017 with the Plan adoption. As part of this process, a week-long charrette was held in November to identify issues, needs, and ideas for a broad range of categories including transportation, housing, land use, and open space. The transportation analysis for this update is being conducted in three phases over the planning period. For more information, please visit: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/86032>

E. I-395 EXPRESS LANES PROJECT

VDOT will be holding a Public Hearing for the project Environmental Assessment(EA) on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 from 6:30PM to 8:30PM with a presentation at 7PM. The Public Hearing will be held at Francis Hammond Middle School (4646 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304). Additional information and links to the EA can be found on the VDOT project website: http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/395_express.asp.

Background: On November 20, 2015 the Secretary of Transportation sent a letter to the City and other jurisdictions noting the State's planned action to improve travel along the I-395 Corridor. VDOT will conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the conversion of the existing HOV lanes to dynamically priced Express lanes into Washington D.C. DRPT will

conduct a Transit / Transportation Demand Management (TDM) study to identify transit, carpool, vanpool and other demand management strategies to improve travel along the corridor.

F. LOCAL MOTION REBRAND

In October 2016, Local Motion changed its brand and will now be called GO Alex. City Staff worked with a marketing contractor, Pulsar, to create a new look and feel for the City's transportation demand management program. The new name GO Alex will be more recognizable and relatable for the City's residents, visitors, and employees. Reaching a broader target audience will help Alexandria's program increase awareness and engagement.

Background: GO Alex promotes and encourages public transit, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking as money and time saving alternatives that discourage driving alone, reduce automobile dependence, increase mobility and improve air quality.